

# Headquarters, 3rd Infantry Division and Fort Stewart-Hunter Army



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## *Press Release* *For Immediate Release*

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### **Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield stresses importance of barracks in reintegration**

**FORT STEWART, Ga. (May 1, 2008)** – The installation leadership here stressed today the importance of providing the best conditions possible for single 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Soldiers who live in they installation's barracks, especially when the come home from deployments.

Providing quality barracks rooms to Soldiers is an important part of the reintegration process, and it is an important Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield mission, Col. Todd Buchs, Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield garrison commander, said. He explained the steps that are taken by family readiness groups, the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program, the rear detachment commands, and the installation support staff to ensure that Soldiers barracks rooms are ready for them when the come home.

"We clean the rooms," Buchs said. "We give our Soldiers a care package that includes toiletries and snacks to get them through the first 48 hours of coming home. We make their beds with fresh linens for them. We move in any personal household goods the Soldier put into storage. We decorate the rooms. We do what we can to take care of our Soldiers when they come home—right down to almost putting a mint on their pillow—so that they can walk into a room that they don't have to do anything with, it's ready to live in."

Reintegration is the 10-day Army mandated process that transitions Soldiers from serving in a combat zone to life in a garrison environment. Pvt. Kevin Okeefe, 5<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, recently went through reintegration. He lives in one of the oldest barracks on Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield, a Voluntary Army-style barracks built in 1978. The room has about 76 square feet of living space. Okeefe recently came home from a 15-month deployment with the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team.

"I've been back for about a month," Okeefe said. "Before we deployed we were in different barracks, but they were similar. Living conditions are pretty much the same as before, but coming back - it feels kind of homey."

The 76 square feet of living space in the VOLAR barracks is too small per current Army living standards, but Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield already has plans in place to ensure Soldiers live in barracks that meet the space requirements.

“Here at Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield, we have a vigorous construction program here, with more than \$300 million in barracks construction planned through 2014.” Buchs said.

The construction will build more “1+1” barracks on the installation, the latest Army standard for barracks. Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield has three different types of barracks: modular, VOLAR, and 1+1.

The modular barracks on Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield are temporary buildings being used by the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team and the Warrior Transition Unit. Three Soldiers have individual bedrooms and share a common area in the 4BCT modular barracks. In the standard VOLAR barracks, two Soldiers share a bedroom and bathroom. The WTU VOLAR has only one Soldier per room. The newest barracks, the 1+1, has two Soldiers who each have an individual bedroom and share a kitchen. Eventually, all barracks will be the 1+1 standard.

Since 1999, the installation has spent \$65 million on barracks renovations, including cleaning, painting, repairs, and replacing floors.

A 1950s-era barracks with roughly 500 spaces was closed and is scheduled for demolition on Hunter Army Airfield.

Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield has 7,768 barracks rooms, and currently 3,687 Soldiers are living on the installation.